



Many of us thought that we would have brought our soldiers home from the Middle East by now; yet, the war continues in Afghanistan. Soldiers are still deployed in Iraq and it now appears as if we may have yet a third front in Libya.

If nothing else, the events occurring in Libya have reminded us that our soldiers are still serving and giving their lives on foreign soil. And, as they do so, too many military families here are going about their lives without their wife or husband, their Mom or Dad; hoping for and waiting for the day they will come home.

When they do make it home they often find things are not the way they were. In this issue, Don Malin shares about some of the struggles experienced by the soldier who makes it home. He speaks from personal experience having served in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Don's article helps us understand some of the problems and offers a couple of great suggestions of how you might be of support. I think his is an important message and I hope you will take the time to read it and to consider how you might help our returning heroes.

As always, we consider ourselves so fortunate to have so many who read this newsletter take the time to invest in our work through your kind financial support. It is because of your giving that we can have ministries, like Don's, to our returning military personnel.

If you are considering a gift at this time, you can give online by clicking the donate button. You can also give by check by following the information below.

Blessings,

Bob Waldrep

## YOU CAN TAKE THE SOLDIER OUT OF THE WAR BUT... BY DON MALIN



Col. Malin Leads Soldiers in Bible Study and Prayer

Have you ever been in a war? I'm not talking about the various elements of everyday life that are often compared to war; things like: the weekend sporting event that is spoken of as "going to war" against the opposing team; the political arena, in which certain voting areas become, "key battlegrounds", or product competition, such as the "cola wars".

No, I am talking about the real battlefield - the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air, kind of war. If you have ever served during

such a war you might agree with the observation made by the famous Civil War leader, General William T. Sherman, who said, "War is hell".

And, as anyone who has served, or has a family member who has served, in a war zone can tell you, it doesn't simply end when the soldier leaves the battlefield. As they quickly discover, **"You can take the soldier out of the warzone but you can't take the warzone out of the soldier."**

All soldiers, returning from war, have memories - experiences - etched into their minds that will forever change them. As much as we might like to hope otherwise, when they come home they are not the same person that left to go to war. I know this to be true.

I served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The sounds of war are still with me. In Iraq, constant mortar attacks along with rocket attacks kept us alert. Mortar attacks sound a lot like thunder. When I came home, during a thunder

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storm my first thoughts were of a mortar attack. The smells of war also stayed with me. Even today, several years after the fact, there are times I smell something similar to what we had in Iraq and I go back to those days.

War also brings stresses that continue to haunt soldiers long after they have left the war zone. For example, I saw and interacted with many Iraqi's. Though most were friendly, we knew there were a few who probably wanted to kill us. As such we had to be ever vigilant. The operational stress got to the point that we were stressed and didn't realize it. Stress became a new normal for us.

Being a Chaplain, I had it easy compared with many in Iraq. However, I was constantly made aware of the effects of the war by my involvement with those who were in combat situations. These men and women attended services that I led. They came to me for counseling about the problems they were having back home as well as those they were experiencing Iraq.

I heard their stories. I listened to them, prayed with them, and shared the gospel with some. The needs in Iraq were many. My experiences there are still a part of me, as they are with all our brave soldiers who served, and continue to serve in that area.

In Afghanistan I was the Forward Operating Base (FOB) Chaplain. I dealt with the men and women who had problems back home. One of the units under us woke me up around 2:30 in the morning. A soldier's wife had been sexually assaulted by his best friend. Imagine that you are in Afghanistan and get that word. What do you feel?

He expressed rage - he felt helpless. The unit got him home as soon as they

could but transportation was limited by many factors; all the more time to stew. What would you say to him? What could you say?

I was there with him but there was not a lot to be said. We prayed but I think he was so full of anger and helplessness at the time he probably didn't hear any of it. I can understand his feelings. He was thousands of miles from home, serving his country and wishing he had been home to protect his wife.

Another soldier I knew was in a ve-

**“I realize this isn't a pretty picture. There is no way I can paint it as such and be truthful. It doesn't have to be this way.”**

hicle targeted by an IED (improvised explosive device). He was unable to get out of the vehicle and, though physically unscathed, he was psychologically impacted by the screams of those within the vehicle. He began to suffer from panic/anxiety attacks. He came to me for prayer.

Being an officer, he was scheduled to go back to leading his men outside the FOB. As we met, I shared scripture, listened, and we prayed. He asked me before he left if he could have me pray for him and his unit whenever they went outside the FOB. I said I would be glad to and a week, or so, later he came by and we prayed.

He seemed to be doing much better after our talk and his discussions with others. Later that week I got word a group of soldiers was hit by an IED in an ambush. As was part of my duties, I

went to the Aid Station and saw some of the guys. They told me they lost a soldier, but I didn't get to see him as he was already wrapped in a flag to be taken home.

As I listened to the men talk I realized who it was that died - the officer with whom I had been meeting. Talk about feeling like the wind was knocked out of me. I just couldn't believe it...tears came to my eyes as I realized who it was. He was married and had one child with one more on the way. This was close to Christmas of 2009. That memory remains with me today; how much worse it is for his family.

Again, I did not experience a lot of bad things. There were frontline Chaplains who went through much more than I did; let alone those who spent most of their time outside the FOB. If I am affected by this stuff, how much more are the men and women who regularly served in combat situations?

These memories and experiences of Iraq and Afghanistan stay with me - the good and the bad. I know what it is to struggle with them. Some of those who serve, and their families, are so affected that they cannot continue a regular or routine life. This battle, or war, or conflict, whatever you want to call it, so dominates their life that it has a negative effect on their marriage, children, family, friendships, career, recreational time, etc. Unfortunately, too often, it ends in divorce, homelessness, jail, drugs and alcohol abuse, depression and, even, suicide.

I realize this isn't a pretty picture. There is no way I can paint it as such and be truthful. But, it doesn't have to be this way. There is another saying in the military, **"no soldier left behind."** If a brother in arms goes down, we will



get him and bring him home. Many of our soldiers have come home but are "left behind" in their heart. They are living in the past and cannot get out of it. We need to bring them home!

Soldiers have contacted me after they got home to tell me of their struggles - to seek some consolation. I realize that my responsibility to help our soldiers, to minister to them, did not end with my tour of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is why I know that CrossSwords is needed.

To cross swords is to prepare to duel, to do battle. While, in a sense, we are preparing to engage in battle with the problems faced by those who serve, the name CrossSwords means much more. The "Cross" gives hope that the soldier who travels from peace into a warzone, can also cross back over. It is the hope Christ gives that a troubled heart can be changed from turmoil, to peace.

The "Sword" is primarily thought of as a weapon of the soldier; but it is also used in Scripture to refer to the authority of the government (Romans 13) to protect its citizens from enemies outside and inside. Today, this "sword" in the hands of the government would be the military and police. So, in a sense, our soldiers are the sword. However, the sword is also referred to as the Word of God (Eph 6:18; Rev 1:16 etc) - that which is able to pierce the heart, to give peace and understanding. The soldier uses his "sword"

to protect; the "sword" of God can be applied to their life to help them heal.

Ultimately, our desire is to help them make the transition (to successfully and smoothly cross back) to the life they once knew through the peace that comes from Jesus Christ. There are four objectives CrossSwords has to accomplish this:



Col. Malin Shares Supplies from 'Table of Grace' With Those He Serves

1. Introduce the veteran to Jesus Christ of they don't know him (Evangelism).
2. Help the veteran **reframe** their experiences in the past with scripture - help them develop a Christian world view (Discipleship),
3. Give them tools and resources to help make a successful **reintegration**, (Restoration) and finally,
4. Develop a **fellowship** of like-minded veterans who want to help others connect and bring them "home." (Provide them a new mission.)

So, here is our battle, a fight for the heart and soul of America's warriors. It is imperative that we find a way to

reach out to these men and women and help them make a successful transition back to their family, and the life they once knew. We must make sure they do not become casualties, after the fact, as has happened with too many of our soldiers in previous wars.

The battle is still being fought. Will you join in this fight?

If so, then start by praying for our soldiers, those who are still in active combat situations and those who have returned from such. Then help them get connected with someone they can talk to about their struggles.

People who have served on the battlefield are often reluctant to share with those who do not share this experience; so, if you know a veter-

eran or service family who is struggling with the effects of war, refer them to us and we'll try to get them the help they need. Of course, the greatest hope we can offer is that which is found in Jesus Christ, who gives rest to all who are weary.

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and I will give you rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30





# Crossties Asia Update



Dwight spent much of this month in the States where he participated in two Church Mission Conferences. While here he was also able to meet with several of his supporting churches, as well as others, to share some of his plans

for future ministry in Thailand.

The plans in the works will not only have a tremendous impact in Thailand, but in other parts of Asia, as well. He will be sharing more about this in future reports.

Before coming to the States, Dwight led a mission team from the US to minister in Thailand. It was an extremely successful time for those who were on the trip. The Lord used this team to help establish deeper connections and open doors for future work.

They were able to speak to school children and to interact with the Thai people who love to be able to practice their English with someone from the West. In fact, Western visitors are very helpful in opening doors for Thai Christians to share the gospel. If you are interested in doing mission work in Thailand please contact us.

# Crosswinds Romania Update



This month both Ieremia and Nelu came to the Crosswinds office in Birmingham where they spent two and a half weeks. While here they participated in two mission conferences and spoke to several groups

and individuals about their work in Romania. In addition to this much of their time was spent in training sessions and working with Crosswinds' President Bob Waldrep in developing our ongoing strategy for ministry in Romania.

Nelu started a Bible School in Timisoara in 1992 and Ieremia cofounded a Seminary, in Bucharest in 1991. The Bible School has since started two extension centers in Spain and is looking to begin another in Austria

One important component of our strategy will be developing an ongoing role in these schools. Our goal is to be able to provide instruction and interaction with the students and professors through long distance education. We will share more about our plans for this in future newsletters.



Mission Team Members Share With Students



Ieremia Teaching at Timotheus Bible Institute, Bucharest

To learn more about Dwight's and Mary Kay's ministry in Asia, visit our website at: [www.crosstiesasia.org](http://www.crosstiesasia.org) or our personal blog site: <http://www.dwimar.com>

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